

FCC official favors Qwest deregulation bid

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Robert McDowell, a member of the Federal Communications Commission, showed strong support today for Qwest's bid to ease pricing restrictions on some services it sells to competitors.

"In a perfect world, the commission today would have taken another step forward to deregulate segments of the telecommunications industry where sufficient competition has grown to obviate the need for further government involvement," McDowell said in a statement. "Thus, I am disappointed that Qwest felt it had to withdraw its forbearance petition regarding enterprise broadband services."

As first reported by The Denver Post, Qwest pulled its petition late Tuesday, stating that it became apparent the FCC needed more time to review the matter. The FCC was under deadline to rule by midnight Tuesday if Qwest didn't withdraw the bid.

The company is preparing to refile essentially the same petition Thursday, said spokesman Skip Thurman. He said Qwest is ready to refile today but has to wait for the FCC to finish some housekeeping issues, such as clearing the old docket.

Qwest is seeking to ease restrictions on what the Baby Bell can charge competitors for access to its communications network.

Businesses and smaller carriers, including Douglas County-based Time Warner Telecom, lobbied against the so-called forbearance petition, stating that deregulation would lead to higher prices and fewer competitors.

In March, Verizon Communications' petition for relief on pricing was "deemed granted" after the FCC deadlocked on the request and didn't issue a ruling by the deadline.

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